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ABSTRACT

Sweden has worked in the last decade to strengthen the connection between education and employment, but still needs to make futher improvements. Recent shifts in the country's labor markets led to more youth unemployment, the displacement of less-educated workers by the more highly educated, and greater problems in the transition from school to work. The Swedish government has addressed these problems through educational reforms and increased educational planning. The planning process, which is performed at the national, regional, and local levels, has been complicated by discrepancies between the plans on the one hand and demand for particular courses and labor market behavior on the other. The educational reforms added vocational orientations to most courses of study at both the upper secondary and higher education levels. They also enlarged the opportunities and funding for recurrent education and broadened citizens' participation in educational decision-making. Because youth employment problems continue, however, futher reforms are needed to increase financial assistance and to improve higher education and upper secondary schooling. (RW)

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PROBLEMS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN SWEDEN.

prepared by,

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This paper has been prepared as a supportive study for the preparation of Document ED-80/MINEDEUROPE/3, for the Conference of Ministers of Education of Member States of the Europe Region due to be held in Sofia (Bulgaria) in June 1980.

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FOREWORD

Unesco's General Conference at its 19th session (Nairobi, Kenya, 1976) resolved that the Secretariat give particular attention to "gathering and disseminating information about new educational policies for the renewal of educational systems, adapted to specific needs on the basis of particular social, economic and cultural situations and aimed at promoting democratization of the systems within the framework of life-long education" (Programme Resolution 1.111).

In line with this mandate the Division of Educational Policy and Planning began in 1977 reproducing selected technical papers and distributing them as a series under the general title: "Reports, Studies ...". The aim of this series is to stimulate reflection and discussion on current issues confronting educational policy-makers, planners, administrators and school architects. Distribution is limited to Unesco officials at Headquarters and in the field, as well as interested technical personnel in governmental and private institutions. It is hoped that this series will promote and serve as a vehicle for increasing communication between individuals and institutions concerned with policy and planning aspects of education.

The "Reports, Studies ..." series consists of two sub-series : (i) papers with a subject orientation (numbered S.1, S.2, etc.) and (ii) papers focusing on a given country (numbered C.1, C.2, etc.). Subject papers deal with such topics as educational policies and legislation, planning and management techniques, planning and design of educational space and facilities, the relationship of education to productive work and employment, inter-country cooperation, the role of education in respect of the New International Economic Order, etc. Country papers are either brief profiles of the educational system of a particular country (mainly the LDCs) or treat a specific reform or aspect of the country's educational system.

Some of the papers reproduced in the series are "desk studies" based on information available within Unesco, others were originally prepared as background or discussion papers for a meeting or seminar, while still others are personal position papers representing part of a continuous dialogue within the Unesco Secretariat.

Papers are selected for the series on the basis of their topical interest. Readers should bear in mind that many, if not most, of the papers are working documents, unedited and not intended for public distribution. Some of the authors have written in a language other than their mother tongue, which explains certain linguistic deficiencies. It must also be stressed that the papers present the ideas of their respective author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of Unesco.

The Division of Educational Policy and Planning welcomes comments and suggestions concerning the series and invites readers to make known their reactions to particular ideas presented or to entire papers. In certain cases it may be possible to reproduce such comments and reactions in a subsequent issue of the series. For the convenience of readers who may wish to contact the author of a paper, the current contact address is given whenever possible.

AVANT PROPOS

La Conférence Générale de l'Unesco, lors de sa 19e session (Nairobi, Kenya, 1976) a décidé que "la collecte et la dissémination de l'information sur les nouvelles politiques d'éducation pour le renouvellement et la réforme des systèmes d'éducation adaptés aux besoins spécifiques basés sur des situations sociales, économiques et culturelles particulières et qui ont comme objectif la démocratisation des systèmes dans le cadre de l'éducation permanente" (Résolution 1.111 du programme) se situent parmi les objectifs prioritaires de l'Organisation.

Conformément à ce mandat, la Division des politiques et de la planification de l'éducation a entrepris en 1977 la reproduction et la distribution de certains documents techniques, sous le titre général de "Rapports et Etudes ...". Cette série a pour objet de stimuler la réflexion et les discussions portant sur les problèmes courants auxquels doivent faire face les décideurs, les planificateurs et les administrateurs de l'éducation ainsi que les architectes scolaires. La distribution se limite aux professionnels du Siège et hors-Siège, ainsi qu'aux personnels d'institutions gouvernementales ou privées susceptibles de les trouver utiles pour leur travail. Nous espérons que cette série constituera un moyen pour promouvoir et augmenter la communication entre les individus et les institutions concernés par les différents aspects des politiques et de la planification de l'éducation.

Ces "Rapports et Etudes ..." se divisent en deux catégories: (i) les documents qui traitent d'un sujet (numérotés S.1, S.2, etc.) et (ii) les documents qui traitent d'un pays (numérotés C.1, C.2, etc. Les premiers portent sur des sujets tels que les politiques et la législation de l'éducation, les techniques de gestion et de planification, la planification et l'étude des espaces, constructions et équipements éducatifs, la relation entre éducation/travail/emploi, la coopération entre les pays, le rôle de l'éducation par rapport au Nouvel ordre économique international, etc. Les seconds présentent des profils du système éducatif d'un pays donné (principalement les pays les moins développés), ou traitent d'une réforme ou d'un aspect spécifique du système éducatif du pays concerné.

Certains des documents reproduits dans cette série sont des "desk studies" basés sur des informations déjà existantes à l'Unesco, d'autres ont été préparés à l'origine pour servir de documents de base ou de discussion à des réunions ou séminaires, alors que d'autres encore, exprimant les positions personnelles des auteurs, se situent dans le cadre d'un dialogue permanent au sein du Secrétariat de l'Unesco.

Les documents sont choisis pour cette série en fonction de l'actualité du sujet traité. Les lecteurs doivent tenir compte du fait que beaucoup, sinon la plupart, des documents sont des documents de travail inédits et ne sont pas destinés au public. Certains auteurs ont rédigé ces documents dans une langue qui n'est pas la leur, ce qui explique certaines faiblesses linguistiques. Nous voudrions également souligner que les documents expriment les idées de leurs auteurs respectifs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement la politique de l'Unesco.

La Division des politiques et de la planification de l'éducation souhaite recevoir des commentaires ou suggestions au sujet de la série, et demande aux lecteurs de bien vouloir faire part de leurs réactions à certaines idées exprimées ou à des documents dans leur ensemble. Dans certains cas, il sera peut-être possible de reproduire ces commentaires et réactions lors d'une prochaine parution de la série. Les adresses des auteurs des documents sont indiquées afin de donner aux lecteurs qui le désirent la possibilité d'entrer en contact avec eux.

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PROBLEMS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN SWEDEN

I The Area of Interest

The interest in the relationship between education and employment has grown considerably in the last couple of years. Facing severe problems of unemployment, particularly among young people, a large number of countries have asked if and how education could help alleviate these problems. International organizations, among them the Unesco and OECD, are arranging meetings on various levels where participating countries can learn from each others' experiences.

Problems of unemployment, including youth unemployment, are particularly serious during economic recessions. But it is generally recognized that transitional problems between school and working life exist in any economic situation. The fact that high unemployment exists together with a high demand for certain kinds of manpower, is another fact which points to in balances in the relation between education and employment. Furthermore, the changes of working life during the 1960´s and 1970´s as regards work organization, job security, work environment and job content, have made the relationship between education and employment much more complex than earlier.

Changes in working life and changes in society in general do create new problems in educational planning. In this paper examples will be given as to how Sweden has tried to link education to employment and working life during the last decades. Some specific problems of planning will also be discussed. They concern factors which influence individual demand for education, namely employment prospects and study assistance. They also concern individual "behaviour" on the labour market.

Within the Swedish educational system vocational education is mainly carried out in the upper secondary school, within higher education and in labour market training. In this paper the analysis will focus on upper secondary and higher education.

Before discussing the specific issues at hand a short description will be given as to the development of Swedish education and labour market.

II Developments in Education and Employment

Education

During the last fifteen years major reforms have been implemented in almost every educational sector. These reforms have been affected by a number of factors stemming from within as well as outside the educational system. The introduction of the 9-year comprehensive compulsory school was followed by the reform of upper secondary education. The last reform of higher education was implemented in 1977.

The main consequence of these reforms has been the creation of a "mass education society". Upper secondary school, which is voluntary, is today attended by about 85-90 percent of compulsory school leavers. In 1970, upper secondary studies were available to about half of each years compulsory school leavers. The enrolment in higher education increased rapidly in the 1960´s. The number of university entrants (first registered) in percent of 20 year olds rose from about 12 percent in 1960/61 to almost 25 percent in 1968/69. In 1973/74 it had fallen to 20 percent but started again to rise and is currently about the same as it was during the peak in 1968/69.

This expansion of the educational system would not have been possible without sustained economic growth. Other forms of education, e.g. municipal adult education, corresponding to courses in the last grades of compulsory school and to courses in upper secondary school, the courses of educational associations and labour market training also grew during these years. The total expansion was a result of determined political decision and showed the great demand and need for education among many groups in the population.

The reform of upper secondary education meant that earlier separate forms were integrated into one institution. The upper secondary school comprises 23 lines of study and a large number of special courses. All the lines contain subjects of a general nature as well as vocational subjects, but the vocational element is still small in some of the three-year lines (liberal arts, social sciences, natural sciences). One reason for integration was the wish to enable students to switch over from one study line to another; another was to make vocational and theoretical education more equal in status.

Through the creation of the new upper secondary school with all its lines and special courses, society was made responsible for education which had earlier partly been carried out by enterprises. The broad vocational training in upper secondary school presupposes, however, that specialized training will be given in industry, commerce, etc after the completion of schooling. Many of the vocational lines are built on the principle of alternation between theory and practice. This means that the pupils will spend part of their time at places of work or at training centers. In the former case cooperation with employers, willing to receive such students, is thus essential for the success of the education. In the last couple of years, however, employers seem to have been less willing to take on this responsibility.

The structure and organization of higher education have changed considerably, particularly through the last reform. First of all, practically all post-secondary education is now included in one unified system. This should facilitate the choice of studies, the allocation of resources to studies of similar kinds, the equality of status between education on the same level, and not the least planning. A new admissions scheme has been introduced, aiming at the recruitment of non-traditional students in terms of educational background. The administrative structure has been changed e.g. through the creation of regional boards, charged with the coordination of the overall planning of higher education within the region. Furthermore representatives of external interest groups, e.g. the social partners, sit on various boards of higher education together with teachers, students etc. This is to ensure that the education becomes relevant for society at large and particularly for working life.

These are some of the features of higher education today. A striking characteristic is the age distribution of the students; in the autumn 1977 for example 55 percent of the registered students were 25 years old or more. This situation is partly due to the changed eligibility rules which have made it easier for individuals with work experience to compete with younger students. Although this was an objective of the new reform of higher education, the question is now asked whether the competition is not too hard for those who wish to enter higher education directly after upper secondary school. In fact, the government has initiated an investigation on the effects of the new admissions scheme.

Employment

The labour market can be characterized in many different ways. One is the structure of the labour force.

During the 1970´s the total number of employed persons increased by 250,000 to 4,100.000 in 1978. This increase is all together made up by part-time employees, who work between 20-34 hours per week. The number of persons having a longer or a shorter working week has thus been unchanged. The number of employed persons, aged 64 years or more has decreased by 50,000 and the number of employed 16-19 year olds has remained constant. This means that employment among those aged 20-64 has increased by 300,000.

It is the degree of employment among the population which has increased and not the population itself. In fact, women have increased their number in the labour force by 315,000 during the 1970´s. Active measures in labour market and education policy have fostered this development. The expansion of the public sector, particularly in the health care area has facilitated the entrance of women on the labour market.

It is important to note that the number of working hours has decreased due to the increased proportion of part-time work and a general cut-down of working hours. Compared to the early 1960´s the number of working hours per employed today is 80 percent.

By international standards unemployment in Sweden has been low during the 1970´s. It has been higher among women than among men and it is also higher among youth than among those over 24 years old. Unemployment was higher during the recession in the beginning of the 1970´s than it has been during the one starting a few years ago.

However, unemplcyment is ore but not the only indicator of the employment situation. Labour market training and relief work are measures which help keeping unemployment figures down. There has never been as many participants in such training or work as in the last couple of years.

The development during the 1960´s and 1970´s has meant that the employment in the various large sectors of the economy has changed. The proportion of working hours in agriculture and forestry was 15 percent of the total number of working hours in 1960 compared with only 6 percent in 1978. The proportion of employed persons in industry and construction has also decreased from 41 percent to less than 35 percent in terms of the total number of working hours. It is the service sector which has taken on an ever larger proportion of employment. As has been mentioned earlier it is the public sector that has expanded the most, although some increases of emplovment have also taken place within the sector private services. The switch from the sector which produces goods to the service sector has been parallell to an occupational change within the labour force in favour of white collar work.

The jobs within the service sector generally require more education than those within the other sector. The new jobs in the service sector may, however, be rather low-qualified ones. Within the sectors of clerical work and health care it seems as if there is evidence in this direction. More information on this subject is needed, however.

There are studies which indicate that there is an increasing polarization of the labour market. Accordingly, automation has meant a dequalification of work tasks for large groups of employees whereas some qualified jobs have become even more qualified and specialized. There is no doubt that individuals who

hold jobs with qualified work tasks participate more in training by enterprises than those holding less qualified job. This is a fact which was confirmed by a government commission on training in enterprise some years ago.

It was earlier noted that higher education expanded rapidly in the 1960's. This increase of individuals with an academic degree resulted in higher unemployment for this group, particularly in the beginning of of the 1970's. It also seemed to have another effect: that these students took jobs from those with an upper secondary education. In turn, some of the students who had completed upper secondary education got jobs which were formerly held by those with compulsory school. Despite the unemployment of university graduates it is thus those individuals who lack a post-compulsory education who get the greatest difficulties on the labour market.

If tendencies towards polarization grow strong the consequences for the educational system may be considerable. Attempts are being made to break the alleged isolation of the educational system by including periods of work experience in the education. In post-secondary education the principle of recurrent education has been adopted as a planning strategy. These reforms may be difficult to implement in a polarized labour market. The efforts towards their realization may, on the other hand, help changing working life in the opposite direction.

Tendencies towards polarization may furthermore be counteracted by other developments in Swedish working life. Employee participation in company decisions, regulated by law in 1975, create the need for qualified and educated individuals at many levels within an enterprise. In fact, training in such matters were frequent during 1976 and 1977 according to the investigations made by the Commission on Training in Enterprises.

The law on job security, which has put restrictions on the right to dismiss employees, has most probably resulted in an increased internal recruitment in enterprises. This means that training financed and/or arranged by the enterprises themselves may have become of greater importance. The demand for specialized, ready-for-production knowledge may as a consequence get lower priority. When training at workplaces increases, educational institutions may also get new tasks in supplementing training with theoretical knowledge.

III Educational Planning

The organization of Educational Planning

The major responsibility for educational matters in Sweden is held by the Ministry of Education. There are two central agencies for education, the National Board of Education and the National Board of Universities and Colleges. The latter is responsible for the planning of post-secondary education; the former for practically all other types of education, i.e. compulsory and upper secondary school, municipal adult education, the education of study associations, folk high schools etc.

Forecasts concerning and investigations into changes in the demands of society and of the economy as to quantity and quality of various kinds of education are included in the planning activities of the National Board of Education. The planning by the Board at the central level highly determines the planning at the regional and local level. The National Board of Universities and Colleges is mainly responsible for national planning and co-ordination of basic education, research and research training at universities and colleges. Both boards deliver their annual budget proposals to the Ministry in the beginning of

the autumn. The Government makes its budget proposals which is submitted to Parliament on the basis of the proposals from the agencies.

At the regional level, regional school boards estimate the educational needs for compulsory and upper secondary education. As regards higher education, Sweden is divided into six regions. In each one regional boards are responsible for the planning of all types of higher education in the region. These boards were established in connection with the reform in 1977.

At the local level, there is a local school board in each municipality. Each year this board estimates the size of the compulsory and upper secondary school, municipal adult education and municipal higher education. The latter mainly consists of education within the area of medicine and social work. The calculations by the local school board are sent to the regional school board which sends them to the National Board of Education along with comments. A similar procedure exists when it comes to state run higher education. Each institution of higher education has a board, the functions of which roughly corresponds to that of the local school board.

The Use of Forecasts

The decisions about the quantity and distribution of education made by the Government and Parliament influence the supply of labour several years later. In order to ground these decisions on a firm basis, forecasts are made concerning the outflow of different kinds of educational groups and the estimated long-term need of the labour market. It is the Forecasting Institute at the Central Bureau of Statistics which makes these forecasts. The latest forecasts cover the years until 1990 and are built upon a long-term economic survey from 1975.

The forecasts as to the size of educational groups are built on the assumptions that the educational system is unchanged and that individual demand for education remains constant. The forecasts about the demand of the labour market for various educational groups use rather a complicated method. Suffice it here to say that the procedure is built up in many stages and that the calculated differences between outflow and need indicate which educational groups may get adjustment problems on the labour market. The differences do not tell us unemployment figures or the number of vacant jobs.

Proposals by the Commission on Employment as to Educational Planning

In 1974 a commission on employment was formed. The purpose of the commission was to obtain proposals for an extended and long-term employment planning. In fulfilling this complex task the commission has looked into other areas, among them education, in order to see what changes a long-term employment policy would call for.

The commission has made a number of proposals in order to promote effective planning in employment and education. As to employment, the commission states in its final report in 1979 that increased resources for planning should be allocated to the central, regional and local level. At the central level, the Ministry of Labour should develop a special section for long-term employment planning. The Ministry should work out annual employment budgets. Cooperation with other Ministries should be developed and they also should create long-term plans in their respective area of competence.

The commission discusses three ways to make educational planning more effective from the employment point of view. One way is to extend the possibilities for long-term planning at the Ministry of Education. At the same time, some of the detailed planning could be decentralized from the central agencies to the regional and local level. This might bring education closer to the needs of each regional and local labour market. A second way would be to further develop and make the methods used in forecasting more sophisticated. A third possibility could be to strenthen the representation of labour market authorities, employers and unions in the institutions of educational planning at all levels.

Some Particular Problems of Planning

The quantitative planning process could in a simplified way, be described as follows. First, the need of the labour market at a certain point in time is calculated. Resources are allocated to education in accordance with this need. Measures are then taken to ensure that individuals fill the places in various educational programmes. Furthermore, the students should complete the programmes, embarked on. Lastly, the individuals should get jobs according to their education. Problems of planning may also arise if the individuals work much less (or much more) than has been anticipated, i.e. if part-time work becomes more frequent (or less frequent) than anticipated.

Discrepancies between manpower and educational plans on the one hand and invididual behaviour on the other are accepted if they are not substantial. There are many other objectives of education than the preparation for work. It should often prepare for further studies or it could prepare for participation in common civic matters, for leisure activities etc. It should also promote certain characteristics with the individuals, e.g. independence and critical thinking. Discrepancies may also be sound. If it is judged desirable to develop new patterns for the division of labour, it would seem unfit to reflect the present organization of working life in the educational system. As was noted earlier, a pattern of recurrency in education could possibly counteract tendencies towards polarization of the labour market.

The governing authority responsible for the upper secondary school is the municipality. Costs, however, are shared between state and municipality in a ratio of 55 to 45 percent. The authority of the state is confined to subsidizing education which it finds

appropriate for a certain municipality to arrange. The state cannot force the municipality to offer a certain educational programme. This is a fact which explains discrepancies between national plans and outcome. It is probable that the central authorities have been subsidizing education with bad labour market prospects to a greater extent during the last years of high youth unemployment according to the principle that any education is better than none. An example of this may be the two-year consumer line[1] in the upper secondary school. It is held, rightly or wrongly, that the municipalities are more willing to offer education on this line than on other more useful ones, as the costs are lower. According to the forecast referred to earlier, around 35,000 students will complete the upper secondary school on the consumer line during the years 1980-1985 but the demand from the labour market for this education will be very low.

Another line with problems in the upper secondary school is the workshop line, although the problems here are of the opposite kind. Since a couple of years the places on this line cannot be filled. As there are few applicants the marks required for entrance are very low. Many explanations have been given to this state of affairs: the kind of jobs in industry for which the education prepares are thought to be monontonous, the working environment to be noisy and dirty, the counsellors of study and vocation guidance have too little knowledge about these jobs in industry, industry itself has talked too much about current problems and not made it clear that they need young people. Whatever reasons there are, it raises an important question in educational planning; how do we convince students to start an education

1) The education is intended to give the students knowledge about the human need for food, clothing, housing and safety in home and at work.

knowing that they may only later be able to use it and that they may even start their career on the labour market with unemployment?

The union of metal workers and the corresponding employers' organization have launched a campaign in order to inform young people about their industry and promote the recruitment to education. It is doubtful whether the campaign is effective but it may be too early to make any judgements on that.

The two examples above, the consumer and the workshop line, concern individual demand for education. At the other end of the planning process is the individual behaviour on the labour market. The cases of teachers will be given as an example of problems in manpower and educational planning caused by unanticipated work patterns.

The Teachers

It would seem fairly uncomplicated to calculate the need for teachers. We know well in advance the number of children who will be attending compulsory and upper secondary school. In compulsory school there are relatively few kinds of teachers: the junior-level and middle-level pupils are taught by class teachers, while senior-level pupils are taught by special subject teachers. In upper secondary school the need for various kinds of teachers may be somewhat more difficult to forecast due to the many different lines and special courses.

However, the present lack of many kinds of teachers is but one sign that planning is difficult. The National Board of Universities and Colleges has received a planning document from the National Board of Education which serves as a basis for judging the number of places in teacher training during the years

1980/81 - 1984/85 and 1980/81 - 1989/90. The educational needs which are presented in this document differ considerably from those presented last year. The lack of special subject teachers has increased substantially. The need for teachers of industrial and craft subjects has doubled. As to teachers in native language instruction (for immigrants) the need is five times greater in this year's document compared with that of last year. For many other categories of teachers the estimated need is greater this year than last year.

The National Board of Universities and Colleges points out in its proposal to the Ministry that the proposed expansion of teacher training puts great demands on the total amount of resources for higher education. The board discusses the problem of resource allocation to various sectors when manpower forecasts exist for some sectors but not for others and when there is a clear responsibility by society for the development of some sectors but not for others.

The variations in the estimated needs for teachers from last year to this year have the following explanation. The latest figures have been based on new information concerning the employment of the teachers i.e. the proportion of teachers actually practicing their profession and the number of working hours.

In the last planning document it was pointed out that
- the need for several kinds of teachers will be much greater than the education system "produces",
- the need for teachers will be much greater during the first half of the 1980's than during the second as a result of the size of the age cohorts,
- the degree of employment among adequately trained teachers continues to decrease.

In June this year the Government asked the National Board of Education to undertake further analyses as to the decreasing degree of employment among teachers. The board would also propose measures to stimulate non-working teachers to start teaching and teachers in part-time work to increase their working hours.

In September the National Board of Education delivered a report to the Government. The reasons for the lower degree of employment among teachers are, according to the report:

- the proportion of trained teachers who practice their profession has decreased in the last ten years,
- the proportion of trained teachers who stay with their profession diminishes considerably among teachers in their mid fiftees, among women in their early fiftees,
- the proportion of part-time working teachers has increased during the 1970´s.

Part-time work has become more common on the labour market as a whole, not only among teachers. The reasons behind this development are several, but one is more important than others. Married women and women with children have entered the labour market in great numbers during the 1970´s. As women often have to take care of children and household chores, they often find it impossible to work full-time.

In order to alleviate the problems that the decreasing degree of employment among teachers causes, the NBE proposes as follows. A campaign is launched in the mass media to recruit non-working teachers. Out-reach activities are used. Courses of reactivation are also proposed. Those teachers who return to their profession could get fewer teaching hours during the first semester. However, these measures cannot substitute

regular teacher training, which must expand, according to the board. Other measures, such as better working conditions, changes in the organization of timetables and possibilities for teachers who are to retire to remain active, are also proposed.

As was pointed out earlier, part-time work has become more common in the last couple of years. In spite of the increased number of persons in the labour force, the total amount of hours of work remain rather constant. In addition to part-time work there are laws which regulate the number of working hours. These laws concern vacation, educational leave, absence for union work, parental leave etc.

There is general agreement among the important interest groups in the Swedish society to cut down the eight-hour work day to six hours. This is a long-term objective, however. Since 1974, a more or less permanent commission to the Ministry of Labour is working with questions of work hours. It looks into the consequences of a shorter work day (or work week) for different sectors of society. One of the future projects is to investigate what the consequences will be for education if the work day is shortened.

IV Adjustment Mechanisms

In the foregoing sections, descriptions of the developments in education and employment have been presented as well as of the planning process and some problems in this process. When planning has been discussed it has mostly been in the sense of quantity. Equally important in the process of mutual adjustment between education and employment is the content of education and work, i.e. the quality. This section will consequently describe which measures have been adopted to strengthen the bonds between education and working life. Compulsory school will be included in the presentation.

Compulsory school and upper secondary school

Almost every aspect of the relationship between school and working life is included in the notion of study and vocational orientation. Relevant features of SYO, as it is abbreviated, will be presented in the following. Two remarks as to the organization of the upper secondary school should be made before that, however. The adjustment between education and employment is, in the Swedish view, promoted by making the educational content broad in scope. The vocational education in upper secondary school does not prepare the students for specific occupations but for work within broad occupational sectors. Secondly, the upper secondary school should be flexible enough to expand in recessions when the demand for manpower is low and shrink when there is a high demand for labour. This flexibility is also attained through specially arranged courses for unemployed youth (cf. below).

A new organization for study and vocational orientation was introduced in 1973 and was fully implemented in 1974. The organization is experimental and has

been evaluated during the last five years. A final evaluation report has been published by the National Board of Education. Parliament will soon decide on the future of study and vocational orientation.

The SYO organization of 1974 entailed the appointment of special consultants, who were only to deal with SYO matters. Before 1974, there was a system with career teachers in which these teachers combined teaching with SYO activities. This system was retained parallell to the new one with consultants during the experimental period.

Study and vocational orientation was to be integrated with the teaching of several subjects, which would call for close cooperation between different categories of people in the school, i.e. pupils, teachers, head-masters, SYO consultants/career teachers etc.

During the experimental period, so called local councils for cooperation between school and working life have been created. These councils consist of representatives of the local school board, the employment service, the employers and the trade unions. The councils have several functions, one of which is to coordinate the visits by the pupils to workplaces. Another is to check the student need for training outside school. As was pointed out earlier, some educational lines in the upper secondary school are built on the principle of alternation between theory and practice. This is also true of some types of higher education.

The Swedish municipalities have been made responsible for pupils up to two years after they leave compulsory school. The follow-up includes study visits to and periods at workplaces and education lines in upper secondary school, visits to the local employment

service, intensified personal or group guidance, information about every possible study route in regular education, in short courses for unemployed youth or in labour market training.

Through the reform of compulsory education the choice of study and occupational field has been post-poned until the age of fifteen when the pupil is in the last grade. Even so, many students find it difficult to make a choice. For these students there is an 8-week course in upper secondary school called "Education and Working Life" which aims at providing theoretical and practical study and vocational guidance. Since 1977, 10-week courses, usually termed short courses, within a specific vocational area can also be provided for unemployed youth. These courses are often combined with relief work.

Orientation about working life is provided for the pupils in a theoretical and a practical way. Examples of the first kind are: working-life orientation as a special subject on the syllabi in upper secondary school, participation in the teaching by persons with experience of working life outside the school, and study visits to educational institutions, work places and the employment service. Examples of practical vocational orientation are: at least three study visits to workplaces in the 8th grade, work experience for two weeks in the 9th grade, and possibilities to extend this period to four weeks in certain cases. Experiments are also taking place with so called enlarged working-life orientation. The pupils should get contacts with working life during six to ten weeks during their years in compulsory school. Attempts are being made to let boys get experience from traditionally female occupations and vice versa in order to break the strong sex-bound choices of study and occupation.

In the final evaluation report referred to above both positive and negative experiences of the SYO organization are presented. The report shows that many municipalities are quite ambitious in implementing the various parts of the study and vocational orientation, such as the enlarged working-life orientation and the follow-up activities. The local councils of cooperation between school and working life appear to have developed rather effective patterns of work. It seems fairly common, however, that the study and vocational orientation is not integrated enough in the different subjects of the syllabi. Furthermore, there is no doubt about it that the SYO consultants have had too great a work load and have often found themselves alone in the planning and implementation of the activities.

Higher Education

In terms of vocational orientation, higher education before the reform in 1977 was strictly divided between the professionally oriented courses with restricted admission and the courses within the faculties of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. In the latter the students could choose almost any combination of subjects, which sometimes resulted in degrees with little use on the labour market. Even before the recent reform a system had been introduced wherby the combination of subjects for a degree in the "open" faculties was limited to what was supposed to be useful on the labour market.

However, the vocational aspect of higher education was strengthened through the reform in 1977. All types of higher education are now included in five occupational sectors; technology, administration/economics/social work, medicine, teaching and cultural work/information. The general study programmes which form the basis in the planning of higher education mostly

correspond to a specific occupation on the labour market. Local study programmes corresponding to the needs of the local labour market also exist and may develop into general study programmes. Furthermore, a new admissions scheme was introduced through the reform, where credit is given for work experience.

The decisions about the actual content of education have been decentralized. The responsibility for undergraduate degree programmes and single courses rests with various programme committees which exist at every institution of higher education. Representatives of working life sit on these committees. The objective is to make the education more adequate from the employment point of view.

Another way of promoting the mutual adjustment between education and working life is recurrent education. In the law on higher education it is explicitely stated that recurrent education should be one of the planning principles. In the Swedish debate, the meaning of recurrent education has varied which has made the discussion rather confusing. It is also used in the sense of overbridging the educational gap between generations and in the sense of further or advanced training for people already active in working life. These functions of recurrent education are not contested but recurrent education as a planning strategy of higher education is more important from an employment point of view. For the development of such a strategy it is essential to look at

- the possibilities to spread the education over several periods,
- the system of study assistance and
- the conditions of working life.

Some educational programmes are organized according to the principle of recurrent education. The study programme in law is one example. Others exist in the areas of medicine and teacher training. A special case is the vocational-technological short-cycle programmes for skilled workers in different types of industry.

Although there are examples, they are rather few. This is not surprising in view of the fact that the reform is a recent one. Another explanation may be the different meanings of the concept recurrent education which has been shown to exist. Furthermore, thorough analyses are needed as to the labour market possibilities to receive individuals who have completed only part of an education.

Negative attitudes towards the deliberate division into blocks of an educational programme may be due to conflicting interests of various groups on the labour market. Persons with a long education might regard persons with a short education as a threat to their positions.

Before deciding on planning an educational programme in a recurrent fashion analyses regarding the educational benefits must be undertaken. If the parts of a study programme are intimately related it may be a disadvantage to break it up.

Except for the above factors the system of study assistance is of vital importance for recurrent education as a planning strategy. But it is actually important in any kind of non-compulsory education. Therefore, the organization - and problems - of study assistance within higher education and upper secondary education will be presented.

Study Assistance

The system of study assistance which has been in use in Sweden until recently has been designed for continuous and uninterrupted youth education of the traditional type. It is actually divided into two systems, one for persons under 20 years of age, and one for those above that age. The former system which is of very modest scope, builds on the notion that the young person is still a part of the family. The latter system is more generous but is designed for young students with relatively small financial obligations. In any event it does not offer a reasonable alternative to income from employment. Therefore, a third form of economic support was created through a parliamentary decision in 1975. This is known as adult education grants.

Students at upper secondary schools may receive study assistance, comprising a grant which is paid to every student, income-tested increments and repayable study allowances. Boarding and travel allowances are supplements for those who live away from home or have to travel daily.

This system assumes that the student is part of the family economy and the level is adopted accordingly. The grant, which is the only form of aid for most students, is about 200 Swedish crowns per month. The level being this low it does not serve as a stimulus for compulsory school leavers to start upper secondary school.

For students in tertiary education and in other institutions where students are 20 (in some cases 18) years of age or older there are mainly two kinds of economic support. One is a grant, the other is a loan. The actual ratio between the two is 1:8. The two together amounts to about 2,000 Swedish crowns per month

Neither system of study assistance is felt to be adequate. A government commission is reviewing the systems with a view i.a. to facilitate the introduction of recurrent education and promote a more balanced social recruitment to education.

The problems of study assistance are somewhat different in upper secondary and higher education. In the former, the economic conditions for 16 - 19 year old persons may vary considerably according to whether they have a regular job or relief work, whether they are apprentices, participants in regular education, short vocational courses or labour market training. Apart from regular jobs, it is economically most advantageous to participate in relief work (about 3,000 crowns/month). Somewhat lower wages are usually paid to apprentices and upper secondary students, trained in enterprises. Students in labour market training usually receives a study allowance of about 1,650 crowns/month. For students in regular upper secondary education there is the above mentioned grant of 200 crowns/month.

As the objective is to make young persons prefer upper secondary education before other alternatives, the economic differences presented above are counterproductive.

In higher education the problem with the present system of study assistance is that it does not offer a reasonable alternative to income from employment, particularly not if the individual wishes to study on a full-time basis. The problem in upper secondary and higher education, is the same in the sense that adjusting study assistance to an adequate level is tremendously costly. In the present economic situation it is unlikely that resources can be reserved for a thorough reform in this area. If a choice has

to be made it seems more likely that a reform of study assistance in upper secondary education would get a higher priority than one in higher education.

Selective measures in the area of study assistance are few so far. The study assistance for adults is an exception. This system aims at compensating for loss of earnings incurred by educational leave of absence. It is thus the financial backbone of the law on educational leave of absence. It is constructed so as to cover the income forgone by an industrial worker. The number of persons who can qualify for such assistance is determined through annual decisions in Parliament. The scheme is selective in the sense that top priority is accorded to persons with limited educational experience and with difficult working conditions in the selection of applicants. It is also selective in so far as it is intended for studies at the secondary level. The only students in higher education who may receive the specially advantageous assistance are those participating in the vocational-technological short-cycle programmes for skilled workers.

V Concluding Remarks

The freedom of action in the educational field - as in other areas - will be limited during the years to come due to the difficult economic situation. There is a need to augment the capacity of the upper secondary school during the next ten years, when the number of 16 year olds is greater than today. The larger age cohorts will put pressure on the capacity of basic higher education in the beginning of the 1980's. It is not certain, however, that the scarce resources will be used to meet this demand. The importance of raising the quality of higher education is recognized and resources may be used for this purpose instead. Likewize, the need for Sweden to develop its research in various fields has been stressed.

According to the last forecast on outflow of ecucational groups and the need of the labour market, 150,000 young persons with only compulsory education will be entering the labour market during the period 1980-1985. About the same figure applies to the years 1985-1990. The labour market need for these individuals is estimated to be very low. It is thus a big challenge for the educational system to try to attract these individuals mainly to upper secondary education. A commission on the upper secondary school is working on proposals for change which should make the education more attractive. It is also possible that the newly adopted curricula of the compulsory school will have a positive effect on the recruitment to the upper secondary school. The curricula gives more room for individual variation at the senior grades, which may stimulate an interest in further education.

The rapid changes of the labour market and in working life which have characterized the last decade will most probably continue. To learn about and consider these changes in planning is another challenge for the educational system. Long-term planning in higher education is now being developed partly as a consequence of the latest reform in 1977.

Some progress may be made in developing recurrent education as a long-term planning strategy in higher education. Possibilities for the sectors of the labour market to receive persons with only part of an education completed can be investigated. It seems difficult, however, to develop patterns of recurrency in several study programmes without reforming the present system of study assistance. Otherwize, the differences of participation in higher education between different social strata may become even more skewed than it is today.